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1900z

Random Observations
of
An Idle Mind





Random Observations



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of
An Idle Mind
WHILE CONTEMPLATING
AN OPEN FIRE

Edward Selden Spaulding
||

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Selden Shelding

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To my son
SELDEN SPAULDING
with affection

THE OAK ON PIGEON HILL

The oak that for a hundred winters stood
On Pigeon Hill and from the wild wind-
race,

The rain, the sunshine, gathered strength
and grace

To rise the titan of the neighborhood

Has been reduced at last to corded wood
And burns within the big, stone fireplace.
I feel its genial warmth upon my face
Like summer sunshine, comforting and
good.

Outdoors, the Winter's heavy, driven rain
Falls slashing downward through the
stormwracked trees
And knuckles angrily on roof and pane.

A wild, wild night without! Within at ease
I stretch my sleepy length and dream
again
Of happy hours spent at the great oak's
knees.

THE FIRST HEAVY RAIN

After the months of desiccating heat,
When all creation cried aloud in vain
For some relief, the sound of the first rain
On field and hill, the heavy, steady beat

Of the big drops on roof and wall, is sweet,
More sweet by far than the inspiring strain
That Orpheus sang on Thessally's fair

plain

To launch full-manned the Argonauts' vast
fleet.

Deep in their cells the mariposas feel
The waking pulse, the seeping moistures
bring

Life to the withered grasses. Soon will steal

From out the ground the tiny blades to sing
Their tiny hymns of thanks, while small
bells peal

To the new world the wond'rous joys of
Spring.

FALL STEADILY, WELCOME RAIN!

Fall steadily, oh welcome Rain, and beat
Your sharp tattoo on every upturned face.
Fill pore and crack and crevice, every
space

Within the Earth's great cisterns with your
sweet,

Reviving fluid, till the springs, replete,
Well up abundantly, the streamlets race
Down the green mountainside at tumbling
pace,
And the long drought is brok'n in wild
defeat.

Fall steadily, oh Rain, and drop by drop
Wash clean each parched and dusty tree
and bush.

Quench the fierce thirst in every throat,
nor stop

Your joyous ministrations till the thrush
Sings in his bower, the finch from the
treetop,

And unseen larks from meadows green and
lush.

GOOD OAK FIREWOOD

Strength gathered from the tempest's
furious might,
Warmth from the frost, and comfort from
the wind,
And stored, God's providence to human
kind
Through all the centuries of doubt and
fright

When in the little hemispheres of light
Close to the flames Man crouched, and all
behind
Him was a region vast and ill defined
Where prowled the creatures of the horrid
Night.

Security and home since time began
For us the blazing hearth has ever been.
I stare into the flames and try to span
The gulf that stretches, phantom filled,
between
That which I know because I am a man
And what I feel, the seen and the unseen.

MISSION PINE MOUNTAIN

These winter months, the hills lie deep
in snow,
Each slope and buttress, ridge, and lifting
crest,
There once in milder days we went in
quest
Of the elusive buck, whose antlered brow
Was there supreme, magnificent; and now
Fierce winds, like arctic wolves that know
no rest,
Rush through the forest isles, that we
possessed,
To sweep them clean of creatures whom
we know.

Lost is our hunter's camp beneath the
drift
And buried deep the well remembered
trail
Down to the spring where primroses did
lift

Their lips to ours, and families of quail
Were shadow patterns that did change and
shift
As they loafed in to drink in that still vale.

FIRE DREAMS

What memories within the flames are
scrolled!

How skillfully they lead my thoughts
away

To wander through the scenes of yesterday
With boyhood friends in pleasures
manifold.

Along its path this spinning world hath
rolled

As much I loved has fallen to decay;
Yet in the ruddy flames these hours of play
And pleasure past seem as they were of old.

Held in a light, hypnotic dream, I see
Again the mighty walls of Zion build
And many a sheer, unspoiled Yosemite

With trees and sunshine and gay
wildflowers filled.

And there is many a face to welcome me
Whose valiant heart long years ago was
stilled.

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE ROPER

Ah, George, upon what distant, pleasant
shore
Do you now walk beneath the broad-leaved
trees,
Hearing the warblers sing their melodies,
From the green sprays, oft stopping to
explore

The likely tangles? Th'all devouring war
Is over now, the doubtful victories
Are won, the victors home, and overseas
Lie those who fought and will return no
more.

When this, my fire, burns out, this warm
glow fades
To ashes, what remains for me and you
And those bright days upon the Palisades

When hearts always were gay and skies
were blue,
When small adventures lurked in all the
glades,
And all we touched and saw was young and
new?

THERE IS NO TURNING BACK

Much though we wish it, we may not
return

To live again days vanished years ago
With those gay, boyhood friends we used
to know

And hold in such affectionate concern.

We go to the loved spot only to learn
Afresh that friends have passed, the
hearth's warm glow

Has dimmed and died, the stones are cold
as snow.

The fire will not rekindle, will not burn.

Although the present moments to us seem
So commonplace, so filled with strain and
stress,

It may be in the future we shall dream

Of them also with warmth and tenderness.
In retrospect, they may hold the supreme
Benevolence our lives will e'er express.

ON PIGEON HILL

Each spring on oak-grown Pigeon Hill
the sun
Beats warmly down, the big, gray pigeons
fly
At meteor speed, like arrows, through the
sky;
While in the stands of dodecatheon
And buttercup the chipmunks frisk and run
Like little children, venturesome yet shy.
They keep sharp watch and flick their tails
and cry
At everything that moves on the Rincon.
But now in winter when the rough storms
sweep
In from the sea, how do these wildlings
fare?
How coldly must the merry fellows sleep
Each in his den! There are no fires there
To comfort them until the warm days
creep
Up from the South and Spring is
everywhere.

THE PAST IS DEAD

The past, the frightful past, seems almost dead.

No longer do the superstitious fears
And eerie forms from the primordial years
Creep through the darkness to surround
my bed.

Around me now the night is tenanted
With mortal shapes akin to mine. One
hears

And smiles when wild coyotes sing of tears
And love to the round moon high overhead.

How pleasantly, abroad at stars' first peep,
I walk along the old, familiar trail
That leads through trees where little
screechowls keep

Their great-eyed watch down to the grassy
swail
Where Evening Primroses in clusters deep
Follow the moon with fragile faces pale.

THE EVENING PRIMROSE

In the soft light, while other flowers sleep
In deep repose upon the mountainside,
The Evening Primrose spreads its petals
wide

To the full moon. There by the little seep

Of water do the yellow blossoms keep
Their nightly trysts with all the shy,
wide-eyed,

Crepescular fraternity that hide
Through the hot noon within the thickets
deep.

Bloom on, fair spirits of the soft half-light,
And show your beauty only to the eyes
Of those who love, like you, the moonlit
night;

Who know the wonder of the starry skies,
The sadness of the Day's reluctant flight,
The spreading glory of each new sunrise.

THE PLEASANT NIGHT

So many of God's creatures shun the bright
Noon hours and choose instead the darkness
 clear

For their pursuits and pleasures! Timid
 deer

Come out to browse in the soft quarter-
 light,

Birds set the moonrise as a time for flight,
While on the surface of the ocean queer,
Unsightly fish from darkest depths appear
And leap with all their strength into the
 night.

And Man, no less than fish and bird, enjoys
The quiet darkness as he makes his bed
Beneath the stars, far from the madd'ning
 noise

Of hard-paved, city streets. There was he
 bred.

The lively talents that he now employs
Were formed there, and there were
 inherited.

FEAR OF THE DARK

Instinctively all children fear the Dark,
Not for itself, for what it may contain
Of eerie forms that they can not explain
Because they have not seen or touched
them. "Hark!"

"What was it?" Centuries of terror stark
When almost helpless Man has crouched
or lain
Close by his fire, or has been chased amain,
Have left their ineradicable mark.

But as the children grow to manhood, less
And less they feel of instinct, more and
more
They turn to reason for their happiness.

The ancient fear, the ancient, thoughtless
lore,
Fade steadily till only dreams impress
The load of terror that the Race once bore.

THE CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER

Eight months ago, as reckoned by the
moon,

Within the great oak's shade at rest I lay
And watched the hard-billed woodpeckers
at play

Above me all the lazy afternoon.

Moved by the welling joys of early June,
They went from tree to tree, from spray to
spray,

In undulating flight, so free, so gay,
They seemed each one a flickering festoon.

Gay birds, so carefree yet so provident,
How many weary wingbeats did you roam
After that day our heartless axes sent

You forth to find another shelt'ring dome
Within whose center you could feel content
To chisel out a second fortress home?

A FLAG ON IWO

Far out in the Pacific, on a height
Of sulph'rous Iwo, fighters battlescarred
Have raised the flag, thrusting the staff
end hard

Down in the smoking scoria while the
fight

Still swirled and eddied round them, left
and right.

There on that barren cone, full striped
and starred,

The Banner took the breeze, and oceanward
Our sailors saw and cheered its colors
bright.

How many other men in other lands
Have lifted high that flag, have rallied
there!

What desperate, what sometimes hopeless,
stands

Have there been made; for men will ever
dare

To rally when a leader in his hands
Seizes the Flag and lifts it high in air!

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Into the maelstrom of this awful war
We send our sons to fight like savage dogs:
In the South Seas, in fever-ridden bogs
And swamps, on deserts waterless; high o'er

White, wave-washed atoll, and on coral
shore

Rich only in its mass of tortured logs
And shattered ships; in northern fogs,
On rotten muskeg and wild, worthless tor.

Beget, ye fathers and ye mothers, sons
In never ending numbers to supply
Brave, human targets for the bombs and
guns;

For War is in the saddle and doth cry
Us ever onward. Coward he who shuns
The battle front and has no wish to die!

THE FAIR DEAL

In every issue of the daily news
Comes sordid tales of politics and graft,
Malfeasance in high office. Men have
laughed

At the old faiths and standards. Gangs
and Crews

Have formed and have by strategem and
ruse

And shakedown reaped the harvest of their
craft,

Have dealt in millions while their victims
chaffed

At the injustice but dared not refuse.

Preferment now is for those talented
In party politics. The wise and just,
Whom Washington respected, the well bred

Of Adams presidency, these are thrust
From public place; yet Grover Cleveland
said:

“A public office is a public trust.”

THIS SENSELESS WAR

Woe unto him who calls young men to die
Far from their homes upon some unknown
strand

In an adventure that is badly planned,
An enterprise that none can justify,

That has no just conclusion. Bodies lie
In bundles pitiful on the wet sand
And roll this way and that at the command
Of the salt waves and the wild seabird's
cry.

Woe to the man who summons such a host
To slaughter. Woe to this great nation.

When

At war's end the incalculable cost

In time and treasure and in shattered men
Is totalled up, and all that we have lost
Confronts us, what shall we in truth say
then?

So MANY VOICES

Far, far away, among Korean hills,
Our men are shot by hundreds every day.
This battleground is much too far away
For us to think oft of it though it kills

And maims our sons. Our own domestic
ills

Fill all our minds. While politicians say
That all is well, we in our homes inveigh
Against corruption and the huge tax bills.

So many selfish parties, faiths, and creeds!
So many priests whose pratings never
cease!

So many bullfrogs in the marshy meads

Who croak the whole night through! So
many geese

Who gabble always! What this country
needs

Is one wise leader who will bring us peace.

A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION

When God created Adam long ago,
He made him in God's image, which must
mean

That Man was made a spirit and, I ween,
Might walk and talk with God at sunset's
glow.

Earthy he was, too, of the dirt; and so
A creature of the fields and hillsides green,
As are the bear and deer; one who must
glean

For food and all brute needs and passions
know.

Now, sons of Adam, far from Eden, raise
Their hands and eyes to Heav'n as they
adore

Their Maker. Loud they chant their songs
in praise

Of Him as they go off to work and war
As ruthless as the beasts. Each hacks and
slays,

And then, returning, worships God once
more.

YOUTH AND SPEED

As in the past, youth must be served by
speed.

Though time is not one of their pressing
cares,

For many years of life may well be their's,
Still must they drive as Jehu drove, nor
heed

The frightful risk to life the modern steed
Subjects them to. The charioteer who
dares

The most upon the concrete thoroughfares
Is rated first among them by this creed.

Old men, whose time upon this earth is
short,

For whom the numbered days pass quickly
by,

These think it mad that anyone should
court

Death in such fashion. In their seasoned
eye,

Such breakneck recklessness is a fool's sport
For all too soon there comes the time to die.

GOOD BREEDING AND THE LACK OF IT

Is there today a maiden anywhere
So fair in face and form as they who look
Out of the pages of an old-time book,
For whom the young swains did so greatly
dare?

Sweet, lovely Lorna, of the raven hair,
To me seems perfect by her wild, Doone
brook;
And Catriona — The Balfour forsook,
Of course, all others for a lass so fair.

Such goodness, gentle, disciplined, is
found
But seldom, for upon our streets now swirl
Excited groups and free, the uncouth sound
Of the loud, banal laughter that the churl
Did use; and license in hard lines is ground
Deep in the features of the modern girl.

THE RAINBOW

In childhood, when the earth seemed
clothed in rain,
And I was forced, indoors, to keep me dry,
I would grow weary and would sigh and
cry
To walk the open fields and hills again.

Then might my Mother, pointing through
the pane,
Show me a rainbow building in the sky,
And tell me of the pots of gold that lie
At rainbow's end out on the grassy plain.

How now, when skies are dark with the
thick storm
And life moves slowly on the sodden mould,
Will Iris, laughing, show her lovely form

And call me to her, as her wont of old,
Out where the unobstructed sun shines
warm
And sparkles on the heaps of yellow gold?

A SMALL BOY IN A DUCK BLIND

At dawn I crouched with wonder in a
blind,
A little boy for whom the stars were
bright,
And on the eastern skyline saw the light
Of the new day just visible. The wind
Came drifting o'er the marshland
many-tined
With cold, sharp barbs. Beyond my sight
In the damp darkness, I could hear the
flight
Of great and lesser flocks of the duckkind.
"Whee-whee-whee-whee-whee", the
duck wings said.
Then came the deep, hoarse croak, the
ghoulish cry,
Of the night heron, flying overhead.
Then other eerie sounds from passers by
Unknown, unseen, wraiths of the marshland
dread,
Toward which I stared, low-crouched,
with fearful eye.

TWO CHILDREN

In the old, sun-drenched city, indolent
By a tradition dear to everyone,
Two children spent their summers having
 fun

In simple ways. Each pleasant day they
 went

Down to the shore and on the hot sand
 spent

Their timeless mornings, swimming in
 the sun,

Hearing the sound of crashing breakers
 run

Along the beach, and therewith were
 content.

How often at Diehl's fountain did they
 meet,

After the sets of tennis all aglow,
For a cold sundae, tantalizing, sweet,

Delicious. (How can older people know
How good it was to them!) Ah, Margaret;
These children lived so very long ago!

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Long, long ago, in the Old Spanish Days,
When don and doña saw the warm hours
 pass
So lazily, with no clock to harass
Them in their cool adobes; when the frays
In cloistered missions, where the sun's hot
 rays
Were turned to brilliant shafts by the
 stained glass,
In quiet reverence celebrated mass;
When swart vaqueros watched the cattle
 graze —

In what warm, cheerful colors now appears
The long past scene! The never varied
 food,
The long, drab days, the cruelties, the fears,
The sicknesses so little understood,
Have been forgotten in the passing years,
And what is now recalled seems very good.

GONE IS MY YOUTH

Where is the youth that once was surely
mine,

The easy, ready strength that took me far
Across the Santa Ynez to Alamar
And on to the Sierra timberline?

Where is the youthful zest that let
me dine

On half cooked beans and trout by crag
and scar,

That made my blankets soft on grav'lly bar
And ledge, and pleasant in the cold
starshine?

Where is the wonder that I once possessed?
Last night I needed desperately the brawn,
The strength I took for granted, and the
zest

That held me spellbound as the flaming
dawn

Painted with splendor the high, granite
crest,—

I called upon them all—but they were
gone.

IN RETROSPECT

Much did I labor in my youth for gain
In that good cause and this new enterprise
Of promise, and I thought thereby to rise
To greater usefulness, to a domain

Of influence and power. Young hopes soon
wane
And early promises materialize
So very slowly, if at all! Hope dies
And, dying, cries that all such work is
vain.

Oh God, our Father, Who alone can
know
All that is purposed in the human heart,
Grant me the wisdom to believe that
though

The whole was not achieved, some little
part
Has been for good, and it will live and
grow
And so fulfill the promise of its start.

WE DIE WITH OUR FRIENDS

As the years pass and one by one my friends
Return to that far country whence they
came,

My life goes forward, seemingly the same
As ever it has been: the deep hurt mends,

Suns rise and set, each bitter season ends,
I still am I, older, perhaps, and lame
In outward form; but inwardly the flame
Of life still burns and a good heat pretends.

This much I know: each time an old friend
dies

A part of me dies with him, and I go
With him to Sheol. Would that I were
wise

Enough, because of this descent, to know
That part of him still looks out through
my eyes,

Speaks with my voice, and does whate'er
I do.

CHRISTMAS

When Winter gripped with its hard, icy
hand
The Baltic world and nights both cold and
long
Grew ever longer, they who lived among
The gloomy, northern firs and spruces
planned

A festival that day the sun would stand
At its low point at noon. With muttered
song
And pray'r they held their rites before a
strong
And lusty sapling in that pagan land.

Now Christian folk in every continent and
clime
About the world, wherever they may be,
And though the fields and glades are white
with rime

Or green with grass, they trim the
Christmas Tree
With love. Ah, Christmas was a merry
time.
Hearth, home, and friends, and my own
family!

FEAR IN THE NIGHT

When sickness comes in the black night
and pain
With fever high to one whom we hold
dear,
Then long the hours grow, great is the fear
That grips our hearts. How anxiously
again

And yet again I search the sky in vain
For some faint sign to tell that dawn is
near,

When the hope-giving sunlight will appear
To drive off darkness and its evil train

Of doubt, disease, and fear, and death and
sin.

Our children are so helpless as they lie
In their white covers, carefully tucked in

By prayerful hands! The thought that one
might die

So young is monstrous. Surely we will win
This present fight with Earth's great
Mystery!

HOME

From the security that we have made
For them our children go, young, confident
In their resilient strength, and all intent
On youth's absorbing problems. So we bade

Our families farewell and unafraid
Went forth together long ago. Consent
We must now cheerfully as we invent
New duties, lest we feel ourselves
betrayed.

Oh God, our Father; where-so-e'er are
cast
Our lots, however scattered we become,
Keep in our hearts warm memories of the
past

And of each other. As we widely roam
Or wilfully, curve Thou all paths at last
So that, as dusk falls, they shall lead us
Home.

NATURES WAGES

The wages Nature pays are not in gold
Or silver for the idle hours spent
In quiet vales and canyons redolent
Of flowers and trees and running water
 cold

And noisy, but are in another metal old
As Eden, where at dusk the First Man
 went
To walk with God by the magnificent
Euphrates, deep and wide and uncontrolled.

We wait in quietness upon the floor
Of some still canyon. In the warm
 half-light
Between the alders and the sycamore

That canopy the stream we watch the Night
Steal softly in upon us, and a door
To Heaven opens as we pray for sight.

THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS

When geese fly high and humble sparrows
go

From bush to bush across the continent,
What force is it, what impulse, that has
sent

These travellers forth o'er land and sea,
o'er snow

And sand, toward distant goals they can
not know,

At best can sense but dimly, confident
That journey's end will come ere strength
is spent

With rest and food and shelter there also?

So fly the birds, stout-hearted, undeterred
By threat of storm or distance, without sign
Or chart to guide them, only deeply
stirred

By the Great Impulse. Would their faith
were mine!

Then need I never falter, for the Word
Would guide me surely to the House
Divine.

THE CHRONOMETER OF GOD

The great clock strikes the moment and the
chime,

Although but faintly heard by urban man,
The swallow deep in far off Yucatan
Hears clear and changes course. In every
clime

The waterfowl and waders with sublime
Concurrence, sandpipers and long necked
swan,

Ascend their spiral ways and in the van
Drive hard to keep the rendezvous on time.

Across the land runs the compelling word.
Trees don new leaves, great rivers rise in
flood,

Warm breezes blow, and everywhere is
heard

The pulsing chorus sung by transient sod,
Enduring rock, and flower and beast and
bird - - -

All at the stroke of the Great Clock of
God.

LATE FALL ON THE MARSHES

The fast-winged ducks across the heavens
 drive

In wisps and skeins and undulating bands,
The shrilling plovers swing across the
 sands

And muds of beach and marsh and lift and
 dive

In unison, the lobe-toed mudhens give
To sloughs a voice, the lanky heron stands
In the still waters of the reedy ponds
So still it hardly seems to be alive!

Although this is the last of the long year,
Though leaves have fallen and though
 trees stand bare,
Wild life is pulsing fast on marsh and mere,

And strident voices everywhere declare
Of far off, sunny shores and waters clear
And high, romantic journeys through the
 air.

THE PATH TO PARADISE

There are town-tired folk who wish that
they

Might take some quiet trail that winds
among

The pine clad mountains, where the
chorused song

Of birds is heard at the first peep of day

And flower masses point for them the way
To Paradise. Ho, brothers; come along
With me. I know of granite summits strong
And high, and icy streams that plash and
play.

For I have trod this Path to Paradise,
Which wanders through the dewy
meadowgrass,
Beneath the shade filled trees, by streams
that rise

In the high snows, and through the
flower mass;

Where fairy lanterns guide my tired eyes
And tiny bells ring sweetly as I pass.

MOUNTAIN QUAIL

High on the tow'ring ridge the red flanked
quail

Glean leisurely beneath the chaparral
That clothes as with a robe the mountain
wall.

Forward they go by tiny path and trail,

One here, one there, one scratching in the
shale

Like any barnyard hen for seeds that fall
From the brush canopy; while others call
Their pleasant greetings, far across the
vale.

“Whou. Whou,” they say. The soft yet
clear sound floats

On the still mountain air and fades away.
I hear the calls but can not see the throats,

The graceful plumes, or swelling breasts
of gray.

After a silence comes again the notes:
“Whou. Whou.” And then once more,
“whou, whou,” they say.

AT THE GENERAL SHERMAN TREE

Crowning the rugged slopes, the huge
trees lift
Their massive heads in strength; and
century
By slowly passing century they see
The seasons come and go, the snows pile
drift

On drift as white flakes, soft and noiseless,
sift
Down through the sprays; and then, how
pleasantly,
The warm sun shines to melt the snow and
free
The forests and the river waters swift.

When Franklin searched the clouds for
lightning, when
John signed at Runnymede the Charter
Great,
When youthful Alexander led his men

To the far Indus — at that early date
This mighty tree stood in this western glen
Youthful and tall and strong, immaculate.

SUNSET ROCK

We sat on Sunset Rock and saw the Day
Fade slowly into Night, the darkness deep
And formless up Kaweah Canyon creep.
Beyond the tree-crowned ridge, far, far
away,

The unseen sun continued its display
Of light; but round us on the hillside
steep
The creature world prepared itself for
sleep
In the tall trees and on the granite gray.

Ah, sad, so very sad, it seemed to see
That brave day pass for aye! A shad'wy
spell
Lay on our hearts, and somewhat solemnly
Our thought o'erleaped the present night
to dwell
On that time, inescapable, when we
Also to this bright world should say
farewell.

THE POET'S INSPIRATION

Wordsworth and Keats, where do such men
acquire

Their golden competency, where the art
That does to dull, dead, leaden words
impart

Life, charm, and motion, and a subtle fire

To catch the soul and lift it high and higher
Above the earthy cares that burn and
smart

Up to the birds who, with untroubled heart,
Sing in the blue, atop the old church spire.

I feel the ache that every sunset brings,
When length'ning shadows climb the
canyon wall;

When Evening comes on silvery, silent
wings

And small birds in the bushes flirt and call.
There in the dusk, when all creation sings,
I must stand mute. I can not sing at all.

THE HILLS IN AUTUMN

Oh, I have climbed up from the canyon
floor

By a steep, breathless trail in the clear,
still,

Cold, autumn dawn. There was no
wrentit's trill,

No thrasher's song; but a great hawk did
soar

And swing up from the creek-bound
sycamore

Into the heavens, free and high o'er hill
And dale. I heard its screaming, wild and
shrill,

Fierce as the heart of the bold predator.

And I have felt the fall breeze, moving
cold

And biting, flowing as a great air tide,
Fing'ring the dry, brown leaves in cleft
and fold,

And whisp'ring urgently: "Hide, children;
hide

"Deep in the shelter of the fragrant mould.

"Oh, hurry down from this high
mountainside."

THE BEAUTIFUL TREES

How lovely are the trees, which God hath
made
To grace their several stations. By the
streams,
In the deep canyons, the tall Alder dreams
Of sunny days and reaches wide to shade
The quiet, trouty pools; lithe Willows
wade
In the cold, running water. In the seams
And on the shoulders, pine and redwood
teams
Climb high in grove and stately colonnade.
And out upon the desert's arid face,
Where drought and heat and cold go hand
in hand,
The Smoke Tree lifts, exquisite in its lace-
Like foliage, the darling of that land.
Each tree in its peculiar niche and place,
As the all-wise Creator for them planned.

A STILL AND SILENT SEA

Once have I swum in warm, pacific seas,
When overhead the brilliant sky was blue
And underneath the sea was saphire, too;
And there was not the slightest breath or
breeze

To ripple the still surface. There at ease
I swam and played, and neither cared nor
knew
What said the clock the carefree morning
through.
Sunshine, warm seas, and idle vagaries!

Like some huge pond that stretched from
east to west,
No swell there was to roll in on the shore
And, toppling forward all along its crest,
To crash upon the sand with pounding roar.
A strange contentment held the deep at rest.
Silence there was the wide Pacific o'er.

HALF ASLEEP AMONG THE SAND DUNES

Oft have I lain upon the sunbaked sand
After an hour's exhilarating fun
In the rough, boisterous surf, and felt the
sun

Hot on my back and shoulder deeply tanned

By hours of lying. The salt breeze has
fanned

My cheek as I have let my vagrant, half-
thoughts run

With vagrant wind and wave from horizon
To far horizon on the curving strand.

Oh, I have lain among the white sand
dunes,
So lazily, so drowsily, so free
Of urban things, and heard the world-old
runes

Sung by the deep voiced waves
monotonously;

The rise and fall and rise of endless tunes
Rhythmic with wisdom from the sleepy sea.

TUMACACORI

The church at Tumacacori now stands
An empty, roofless shell. The heavy doors,
Which held at bay through countless feuds
and wars

The savage furies of the Indian bands,

Long since have given way; and greedy
hands

Have stripped the Mission of its sacred
stores,

Have even dug beneath the once cool floors
For fabled treasure in these sterile sands.

In spite of the unpard'nable neglect,
The wastage of each careless, vandal year,
Still do the heavy walls and tower reflect

The staunchness of the men who labored
here

To snatch brands from the burning and who
recked

Not cost. Brave men, devoted and sincere!

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Deep in a land, whose rocks are red as
blood,

A small stream runs between the walls
that rise

Sheer, bare, and bold to meet the sapphire
skies.

Here in an emerald grove of cottonwood

Once Brigham Young, the Mormon
Leader, stood

With his bold partisans. In awed surprise
He named the canyon "Zion", "Paradise",
Where men might worship God in thankful
mood.

Though we who come so easily through
drought

And heat and barren wastes of rock and
sand

Can not but feel within us surging doubt

Of it, the weary, travel-hardened band
Cheered Brigham when he cried, with
courage stout:

"This is the Place. This is the Promised
Land."

THE PTARMIGAN

High on the mountaintop, where banks
of snow

Lie all year long, where on the talus slide
The Conies cry their shrill alarms and hide
Secure when cold, snow-laden, storm-
winds blow,

Too high by far for pine or spruce to grow,
The Gentle White-tailed Ptarmigan
reside

In undisturbed contentment, well
supplied

With all those needs their simple natures
know.

We climbed the alpine steep to the last
hill

(whose rocky top was almost three miles
high)

One day in summer. Then the wind blew
chill

As ominous, black clouds obscured the
sky;

And there the Ptarmigan, unruffled, still,
Watched our approach with unconcernéd
eye.

TWO PATHS TO WEALTH

Two paths to splendid wealth there are,
it seems.

The one that Croesus trod long years ago,
Whose golden milestones cast so rich a glow
That every page of history still gleams

Auriforously. Since then, the base man's
schemes

Have been of wealth to equal to this; and
no

Slight chance has been too grim, no crime
too low,

If it but promised wealth to match their
dreams.

The second is that of the Ptarmigan,
Whose wants are simple and whose needs
are few:

High mountain sides and tops from which
to scan

Sunrise and sunset gold, a lake or two
To mirror the bright sky with partisan
Delight, and pastures fresh with rain and
dew.

THE MARMOT AND THE CONY

The mysteries of life are very great
And quite beyond our powers to devise
The answers. Marmots of impressive size,
Fat, shaggy fellows, when the year grows
late,

Retreat into the dens they excavate.
Deeply they sleep as high the snowdrifts
rise
Above their heads and moistures crystalize
To ice around them. Thus they hibernate.

The Cony, tiny yet stout hearted sprite
Of the high rock slides, spends his sunlit
day
In preparation for the long, cold night.

Hour after hour he cuts and cures his hay;
And when the snowdrifts cover him up
tight,
Secure he feasts on stores he cut in May.

FOUR CHAMBERS OF THE HEART

Four chambers are there in the good man's
heart:

A workshop where the laborer can lean
Over his workbench and with interest keen,
Sharp eye, and firm, sure hand perform
his part,

However sized, of this world's work. An
Art

Museum for the wonders he has seen
And heard and read of, articles that mean
Beauty and Joy, perhaps some Way or
Chart

Of Life from ancient Babylon, a gum
From the old Nile used in a cult divine
And fragrant still. A large gymnasium

Where he may laugh, have fun in sport, and
dine

With boyhood friends who to his house
have come.

The Fourth is holy, for it walls a shrine.

PARIS MAKES HIS CHOICE

As Paris sate on Ida's sunny slopes
And watched his woolley flocks graze
 tranquilly
The pungent herbs and grasses of that lea,
He let his mind run with the fears and
 hopes

That torment growing boys as each one
 gropes
His way to manhood. Wished he to be
 free,
Yet doubted; might it not be best to be
Secure though bound by strong parental
 ropes?

Should he in time ascend his father's
 throne,
Have wealth and pow'r, for which all
 princes strove?
Should he seek Wisdom in some cell alone

On some high hill, within some sacred
 grove?
Or Love . . . The young man, raising,
 flung a stone
Into the brook and went in quest of Love.



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Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide

Treatment Date: JUN - 1999

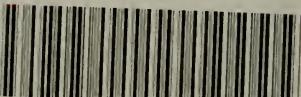


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